

Mother Who Never Grew Old

I was the ring
you dropped in the river
among the rough rocks
and minnows.

Think of all the nevers again
looking into my angry face
and me into yours.

Think of all the forevers –
waft of a sweet cake
burning.

Were you the hawk in a nearby field,
or the mice nesting in the walls?
Were you the crowbar
or the wheel?

Here is the song
you used to sing,
just out of range, trembling
like a rope bridge
between that brick house
and this plain morning.

Ghostwriting my Autobiography

I notice my thoughts plagiarizing my dreams
because they hold the core of the story –

in the small blue room I shared with my sisters,
a woman sings a lullaby, evening light foreboding.

This morning hung with fog as woodpeckers
knock through muffled streets.

When one ghostwrites
the self is less lonely.

All night I rummaged anxiously
through the junk drawer of memory.

I try not to recognize the metaphor
of my bedroom window

when the maker of a woodpecker's song
can't see the glass and flies into the reflection.

Letter to Time

This morning I searched
the topographical map of my face
wondering how these seasons layer themselves
bringing me at once closer to
and farther from each December.

I remember standing nervously in the cold
of this quiet city
with its frozen branches clicking
and the sudden violent
scraping of a plow over pavement.

It was December,
as if it were always December,
the satellite radio piping out from the coffee shop
and the milky dark of the night sky hanging close.

It seemed then that my life
moved forward by the velocity of mistakes.
I stood watching the snow coming down
with its furtive attempts to cover
all our tracks and clutter.